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UPON REFLECTION

by

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Abstract

General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur was a complex man whose behaviors seem contradictory on the surface. In fact, he demonstrated an enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about himself and his environment. This consistent personality is evident across a wide range of social and personal contexts and can be traced back to his developmental childhood and adolescent years.

This research recounts MacArthur's personality development from childhood, investigates his last military campaign, and, finally, applies the diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder to the assembled data. Upon reflection, MacArthur's apparent behavioral inconsistencies are reconciled within this clinical framework.

Finally, organizational, heuristic and predictive implications are drawn from this research. Academic and operational military uses are suggested.

Chapter 1

Lineage of a Deity

He was a great and thundering paradox of a man, noble and ignoble, inspiring and outrageous, arrogant and shy, the best of men and the worst of men, the most protean, most ridiculous, and most sublime. No more baffling, exasperating soldier ever wore a uniform. Flamboyant, imperious and apocalyptic, he carried the plumage of a flamingo, could not acknowledge errors, and tried to cover up his mistakes with sly childish tricks. Yet he was also endowed with great personal charm, a will of iron and a soaring intellect. Unquestionably he was the most gifted man-at-arms this nation has produced. He was extraordinarily brave. His twenty-two medals – fifteen of them for heroism – probably exceeded those of any other figure in American history.¹

These apparently contradictory behaviors notwithstanding, General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur demonstrated an enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about himself and his environment. His consistent personality is evident across the range of life events and can be traced back to his developmental childhood and adolescent years. Examined from a clinical perspective, the behaviors referenced above are understandable and consistent.

This research will recount MacArthur's personality development from childhood, investigate his last military campaign, and, finally, apply the diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder to the assembled data. Upon reflection, MacArthur's apparent behavioral inconsistencies are reconciled within this clinical framework.

A Child is born in Little Rock

Douglas MacArthur was born at the residence for officers in Little Rock, Arkansas, on January 26, 1880.² This was his grandfather's 65th birthday.³ He was the third child of Captain Arthur MacArthur II and Mary Pinkney MacArthur. Arthur III and Malcolm were his elder brothers by 3½ and 2 years, respectively.⁴ Douglas later recalled, Malcolm's death from measles in 1883 was "a terrible blow to my mother, but it seemed only to increase her devotion to Arthur and myself."⁵ The appendicitis and death of highly decorated Annapolis graduate and naval Captain Arthur MacArthur III, on December 2, 1923, left Douglas the surviving sibling at 46 years of age.⁶

Gods and Demigods

Judge Arthur MacArthur, patriarch and founder of the family dynasty in America, was a Scottish immigrant and peer to senators, college presidents, jurists and industrialists. As an aristocrat, he lived the philosophy of *noblesse oblige* through his many charitable pursuits.⁷ Douglas remembered the judge as "a large handsome man, of genial disposition and possessed of untiring energy."⁸

The career of Douglas MacArthur was a "projection and extension" of an even more notable god in the family pantheon, Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur II.⁹ Seventeen-year-old first lieutenant of volunteers Arthur II was commissioned into the 24th Wisconsin Infantry on August 4, 1862.¹⁰ During the Civil War, the "boy colonel" and hero of Missionary Ridge earned the Congressional Medal of Honor by taking up the fallen regimental colors and charging forward. Subsequently, Arthur II imposed democracy on the Philippines at bayonet point. Ever energetic and dedicated, he earned a Doctor of Laws degree when 45.¹¹

Lieutenant General MacArthur was the senior US Army officer on June 2, 1909, when he retired at the Taft administration's onset. However, he retired without honors, shorn of power and sick at heart. His longstanding and vociferous confrontations with President Taft began over military subordination to civilian authority, when Taft succeeded Arthur MacArthur II as Philippine governor.¹² Lieutenant General MacArthur died dramatically and immediately after addressing his civil war regiment's reunion on September 5, 1912. This was 50 years exactly after the 24th Wisconsin Infantry first marched off to battle.¹³ At his explicit instructions, the old general was buried utterly devoid of military display and not at Arlington National Cemetery. Arthur III and Douglas were the sole serving military officers at their father's funeral.¹⁴

Arthur II was a vigorous, bellicose, pugnacious, relentless and heroic military leader.¹⁵ According to General Enoch Crowder, "Arthur MacArthur was the most flamboyantly egotistic man I had ever seen---until I met his son."¹⁶ The obviously Victorian and anachronistic pattern of Douglas' speech also was passed from father to son.¹⁷

The goddess among them was Douglas' mother. Mary, "Pinkey," MacArthur seldom showed disappointment and was an inspiring leader among officers' wives. In Douglas' youth, she was a "young falcon" with "her swift poise and the imperious way she held her head."¹⁸ She was vivacious, strong-willed and descended from well-to-do planters and commission merchants of Norfolk, Virginia. They were Southerners through-and-through.¹⁹ Pinkey impressed upon Douglas that his fastidious manner of dress was legacy from gentry on her side of the family. She imprinted him with their noble lineage, his father's heroism in battle and a MacArthur's sacred duty to sustain and

surpass these glorious traditions.²⁰ His ever-attentive mother nursed Douglas, her second surviving son, through childhood attacks of diphtheria, measles, scarlet fever and mumps.²¹ Bearing the personal cost of separation from her husband, she accompanied her “mama’s boy” to the US Military Academy where she monitored his room from the Craney’s Hotel to ensure he was conducting himself well. She ordered him to be mercilessly ambitious. Ever involved in his advancement, Douglas’ mother repeatedly wrote ridiculous letters to MacArthur’s superiors that demanded his promotion throughout his rise to Army Chief of Staff.²² According to Douglas, the tie to his mother “was to become one of the dominant factors in my life.”²³

In a singular instance of open revolt against mother’s wishes, Douglas married a sexy divorcee and heiress, Louise Cromwell Brooks. Fundamentally, each was profoundly different from the other. In the devil may care 1920s, Douglas didn’t understand the stock market, didn’t care for jazz and would not sample bathtub gin. The junior Mrs. MacArthur was an aficionado of all three. Paradoxically, each also was profoundly similar to the other in unshakable devotion to the lifestyle conducted prior to marriage.

With their engagement announced on January 22, 1922, the senior Mrs. MacArthur was appalled by the prospect and took to bed ill with her hopes and dreams in shambles. She confided to a friend that the attraction was purely physical and refused to attend the wedding. By all accounts mother knew best in this case.

On the arms of various escorts, MacArthur’s wife was reported in newspaper gossip columns to be involved in a variety of compromising situations that involved speakeasies and week ends in Westchester.²⁴ Douglas agreed to divorce on “any grounds that will not

compromise my honor.”²⁵ Although the senior Mrs. MacArthur chose to live apart from Douglas throughout this marriage, her formidable spirit remained imposingly present even while Douglas was stationed eleven thousand miles away in the Philippines. The union ended formally, after approximately seven years, on June 18, 1929. The former Mrs. MacArthur later commented, “It was an interfering mother-in-law who eventually succeeded in disrupting our married life.”²⁶

After his divorce, 54 year old four-star General MacArthur kept an exquisitely beautiful and substantially younger Eurasian mistress isolated in a Washington hotel apartment. He showered her with gifts including many lacy tea gowns but no raincoat. MacArthur explained the raincoat was unnecessary because her duty lay in bed. When the young lady finally revolted, Douglas dispatched another officer to the mezzanine of the Willard Hotel on Christmas Eve 1934 to buy her silence with a bundle of hundred dollar bills. MacArthur, the Army Chief of Staff, was terror stricken that his mother might find out.²⁷ Only after the death of his mother did he happily marry on April 30, 1937 and have his son, Arthur IV.²⁸

This is my Father’s House

The “Three Commandments”

Douglas MacArthur began his West Point education in 1899 with the highest entry score among that year’s cadets.²⁹ He played shortstop on Army’s first baseball team and scored the winning run against Navy.³⁰ He managed the football team.³¹ According to a classmate, Brigadier General Hugh Johnson, Doug MacArthur was “the most handsome man I have ever seen.”³² According to another classmate, “he was arrogant from the age

of eight.”³³ MacArthur testified before Congress for the first time when a cadet.³⁴ He completed the four-year West Point curriculum with a 98.14 per cent average, the highest since 1829 when Robert E. Lee earned 98.33 per cent.³⁵ In his last year, MacArthur attained the highest marks ever of any West Point cadet.³⁶ MacArthur confided in his roommate that “next to his family, he loved West Point” and the traditions of the “long Gray Line.”³⁷ In 1917, his chemistry professor at West Point was asked which former pupil would earn the greatest reputation in the war. Without pause the professor replied, “Douglas MacArthur.”³⁸ Douglas was a major.³⁹

As perhaps the first clear indication of his unflinching sense of entitlement, Cadet MacArthur nearly ended his military career prematurely over a mathematics examination. By tradition, the cadet earning the highest grades in a course was excused from the final examination. When Douglas was not excused, although his mathematics scores were the highest, he stormed to the quarters of his lieutenant colonel instructor. The instructor explained that because Douglas had missed several quizzes due to illness he was not excused. Cadet MacArthur fumed as he returned to his room resolute either to be excused or to resign by 9:00 A.M. the following morning. No one, including his mother, could dissuade him. At 8:50 A.M. the next morning, an orderly arrived with news for a well-rested MacArthur that he was excused from the examination. The lieutenant colonel lost face as a MacArthur’s steely determination was triumphant.⁴⁰

His father and the Secretary of War, Taft, both attended Douglas’ graduation from West Point. The Secretary, his father’s ardent adversary, summoned Cadet MacArthur, the outstanding graduate, forward offering Douglas a diploma and an outstretched hand. The cadet posted, secured the diploma, rebuffed the hand, saluted the Secretary, faced

about, presented the diploma to his father, and sat down at the feet of his father.⁴¹ Psychologists know the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, whether the Secretary or President is Taft or Truman.

Fifty-nine years after this graduation, MacArthur's lifelong devotion to the Point and its three commandments eloquently echoed across the Corps of Cadets one last time. "In the evening of my memory, always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes in my ear --- Duty --- Honor --- Country . . . When I cross my last conscious thoughts will be of the Corps --- and the Corps --- and the Corps."⁴²

Douglas in the Wilderness

The period between graduation from West Point and service in World War I was a time of seasoning for MacArthur, the soldier. As Brigadier General Carter stated in Douglas' efficiency report, he "appears to be an active, capable officer who needs only experience to fit him for any military work."⁴³ However, Carter's appraisal was not universal. The future General-of-the-Army was insubordinate and nearly court-martialed on three occasions.⁴⁴ Again, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

Shortly after commissioning, Lieutenant MacArthur was off to the Philippines and his baptism by fire. In 1903, a company of engineers under his supervision was clearing jungle on the island of Guimaras when gunfire from Moro insurgents cut down his orderly. A subsequent volley shot through MacArthur's campaign hat. Blanched and shaken by the experience, Douglas nevertheless quickly rallied the troops, drove off the attackers, and personally shot two of them dead with his pistol.⁴⁵

MacArthur came under fire next in 1914 during the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico. Disguised as a peon, he led a reconnaissance behind the lines of his adversary

and captured three locomotives for the Americans.⁴⁶ MacArthur's venture killed perhaps seven Mexicans and was the sole hostile action involving combat deaths during the entire seven-month expedition. Correspondence to a former Army Chief of Staff advocated Douglas' nomination for the Congressional Medal of Honor.⁴⁷

In 1908 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, MacArthur assumed command of "the lowest rated of twenty-one companies at the post."⁴⁸ Through arduous training and a MacArthur's resolve, the company subsequently was judged best on post actually setting an Army record for speed constructing pontoon bridges.⁴⁹ "Tall, lean, athletic, gentlemanly but firm, calm in crises, with tremendous reserves of physical and nervous energy, he became the apotheosis of leadership."⁵⁰

The Rainbow Division, a composite National Guard organization of citizen soldiers, was created on August 1, 1917. Major MacArthur actually proposed this concept to Brigadier General Mann, head of the War Department's Militia Bureau.⁵¹ Major MacArthur even named the Rainbow Division, stating it would "stretch over the whole country like a rainbow."⁵² Major MacArthur, Army Corps of Engineers, United States Army, was commissioned Colonel MacArthur, Infantry, in the National Army. Against the rules, this recommissioning occurred over the protest of some and without the release from active army service required by others. As MacArthur later recalled, "I could think only of the old 24th Wisconsin Infantry."⁵³

The Road to Calvary

A MacArthur's grandiose and unflappable sense of entitlement notwithstanding, even the most cursory examination of his career reveals a panoply of stellar and peerless accomplishments. These included brigade command and promotion to brigadier general

at 38 during World War I.⁵⁴ He suppressed hazing, updated the curriculum and modernized instruction as Superintendent at West Point.⁵⁵ As Army Chief of Staff, Douglas MacArthur became the eighth American ever to wear four-star rank.⁵⁶ In World War II, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor at 62 for his defense of Bataan.⁵⁷ Also during World War II, he was appointed Supreme Commander for Allied Powers.⁵⁸ After the War, MacArthur transformed Imperial Japan into a liberal democracy.⁵⁹ Finally, in Korea, General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur became United Nations Commander at 70.⁶⁰ In the end, MacArthur's ill-advised outspokenness and insubordination to civilian authority precipitated his unceremonious dismissal by President Truman.⁶¹

Douglas MacArthur was emersed among gods and demigods from his earliest recollections. They forged his enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about himself and his environment. A MacArthur commands respect from those at the pinnacle of power and wealth. A MacArthur displays honor, gallantry and magnanimity.⁶² A MacArthur is dignified, usually formal and never coarse in manner or deed as befits an aristocrat. Douglas also learned a reckless outspokenness and disdain for civilians who interfere in a MacArthur's dominion. Finally, Douglas inherited the next generation of US Army senior leadership, beholden to a MacArthur during its rise to prominence.⁶³

Notes

¹ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 3.

² Gene Schoor, *General Douglas MacArthur, a Pictorial Biography*, New York: R. Field Co., 1951, 15.

³ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 24.

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⁴ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 23.

⁵ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 51.

⁶ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 46-47.

⁷ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 7-11.

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⁹ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 6.

¹⁰ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 12-14.

¹¹ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 6-16.

¹² James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 42-43.

¹³ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 24.

¹⁴ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 42-43.

¹⁵ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 6.

¹⁶ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 26.

¹⁷ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 14.

¹⁸ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 51.

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²⁰ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 10.

²¹ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 51.

²² William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 4-5.

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²⁴ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 127-141.

²⁵ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 141.

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²⁶ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 141.

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²⁸ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 284.

²⁹ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 27.

³⁰ Gene Schoor, *General Douglas MacArthur, a Pictorial Biography*, New York: R. Field Co., 1951, 20.

³¹ John Gunther, *The Riddle of MacArthur; Japan, Korea, and the Far East*, Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1950, 33.

³² James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 69.

³³ John Gunther, *The Riddle of MacArthur; Japan, Korea, and the Far East*, Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1950, 33.

³⁴ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 5.

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⁴⁰ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 59.

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⁴³ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 88.

⁴⁴ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 5.

⁴⁵ Gene Schoor, *General Douglas MacArthur, a Pictorial Biography*, New York: R. Field Co., 1951, 21.

⁴⁶ Gene Schoor, *General Douglas MacArthur, a Pictorial Biography*, New York: R. Field Co., 1951, 22.

⁴⁷ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 121.

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⁴⁸ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 101.

⁴⁹ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 102.

⁵⁰ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 5.

⁵¹ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 134.

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⁵⁴ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 256.

⁵⁵ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 116-127.

⁵⁶ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 274.

⁵⁷ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 165.

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⁵⁹ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 457-462.

⁶⁰ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 337.

⁶¹ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 640-647.

⁶² James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 11.

⁶³ James D. Clayton, *The Years of Douglas MacArthur*, Vol. 1, 1880-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 43-44.

Chapter 2

Near Disaster along the Yalu

Maintaining the initiative during offensive operations is the dominating consideration for success, and requires vigorous adherence to the key characteristics of surprise, concentration, tempo and audacity.¹ Even a Douglas MacArthur invites defeat when these four characteristics are ignored. The failed 1950 campaign by United Nations (UN) forces to reunify Korea culminated in "near disaster on the Yalu" and clearly demonstrates this unyielding truth.²

To the Yalu

In contrast to horrors ahead, MacArthur set the stage earlier in 1950 for the triumphant advance of UN forces North across the 38th parallel into the Peoples Republic of Korea (PRK). On June 25, the PRK invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK). On June 27, President Truman ordered US air and naval forces to defend the South. President Truman committed the American Army to this mission on July 1. The UN Security Council appointed General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur as Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command (UNC) on this same date. Within a month, MacArthur's beleaguered forces clung tenuously in a defensive perimeter near Pusan in the far South of the nearly conquered Korean peninsula.

In a stroke of brilliance on September 15, MacArthur spectacularly transformed this bleak situation. His amphibious assault at Inchon, far to the North of Pusan and near the 38th parallel, succeeded brilliantly. PRK supply lines were slashed and the overextended PRK army was dispatched to scamper North in disarray.³ On September 16, the UNC launched its counteroffensive along the Pusan perimeter. MacArthur's forces broke out at Pusan, surged North and smartly consolidated their liberation of the ROK. Therefore, MacArthur transformed imminent conquest of the ROK into a UN victory within a matter of days.⁴ With the army of the PRK disintegrating, many hoped the war was won. In fact, the Truman administration concluded UN forces were poised on the verge of complete victory.⁵

As just tribute to the commander, General Matthew Ridgway praised General-of-the-Army MacArthur as “one of the few geniuses it has been my privilege to know.”⁶ Ridgway also accurately assessed a far less advantageous result from MacArthur’s timely miracle at Inchon.

A more subtle result of the Inchon triumph was the development of an almost superstitious regard for General MacArthur’s infallibility. Even his superiors, it seemed, began to doubt if they should question any of MacArthur’s decisions and as a result he was deprived of the advantage of forthright and informed criticism, such as every commander should have--particularly when he is trying to “run a war” from 700 miles away.⁷

As such, MacArthur pressed on without constructive criticism from levels that demanded his attention. MacArthur's decision to cross the 38th parallel was made in this environment following the triumphant Inchon landing.⁸

In his message to the Department of the Army on October 1, General MacArthur declared his intentions. Unless he received instructions to the contrary by 12:00 the very next day, UNC operations would be “limited only by military exigencies and the national

boundaries of Korea.”⁹ Routed PRK forces fled back across the 38th parallel in disarray with victorious UN forces in pursuit. President Truman was reassured by this situation as MacArthur proceeded North to destroy remaining PRK forces. After all, the President received personal and unambiguous assurances from the General himself that Russian and Chinese formations never would enter Korea.¹⁰

Characteristics of the Offense

Surprise

Commanders achieve surprise by striking the enemy at a time or place, or in a manner, for which he is not physically or mentally ready. Knowing the enemy commander’s intent and denying his ability to conduct thorough and timely intelligence is crucial.¹¹

“Perhaps never in history has a general so thoroughly floodlit his plans for the enemy.”¹² As an example, the "Times" of London proclaimed on November 24 “that seven UN divisions---three of them American and four South Korean---as well as the British Commonwealth brigade, are ready for what is called the final push to clear the lower reaches of the Yalu River from the west coast to the point where South Korean troops have already reached it.” A deluge of other intimate details describing UN forces knowingly was broadcast to the world.¹³ In contrast and unknown to the UNC, the Chinese poised 300,000 troops to attack the UNC on November 24.¹⁴ Through stealth, discipline, and perseverance, the Chinese seized the element of surprise as “a phantom that cast no shadow.”¹⁵ When MacArthur launched his "end-the-war offensive" on November 24, it was the UNC that was surprised.¹⁶

Concentration

While surprise may contribute to offensive success, concentration is the ability to mass effects without massing large formations and is therefore essential for achieving and exploiting success.¹⁷

US Army doctrine required the concentration of UN forces across the peninsula under a single field commander. Instead, MacArthur severed his command in the field under two separate commands, the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps. While the Eighth Army advanced North bounded by the western coast of Korea, the Tenth Corps advanced abreast the Eighth Army bounded by Korea's East coast. This ill-advised diffusion of authority promoted tensions between the separate staffs. Logistical, operational, communication and interpersonal difficulties resulted that inevitably diffused the concentration of combat power.¹⁸

If Lieutenant General Walker had been placed in command of the Eighth Army and Tenth Corps, pursuit and destruction of the PRK army would almost certainly have been expedited. He and his staff had developed the concept to send the Tenth Corps overland to seize P'yongyang. The Eighth Army would then follow, seize Wonsan and finally link up with the ROK First Corps already advancing North along the East Coast of Korea. This alternative plan was contrary to General-of-the-Army MacArthur's own and Lieutenant General Walker chose not to pass it along to his boss.¹⁹

Inadequate concentration developed further into the Achilles heel for UN forces during their final advance to the Yalu. An undefended 25-mile gap developed between the Eighth Army on the West and the Tenth Corps to its East.²⁰ To make matters worse, the ROK Second Corps manned the Eighth Army's eastern flank next to this undefended 25-mile gap. Even General Walker, their Eighth Army Commander, publicly described these ROK troops as "unpredictable." This undefended breach between the UNC's

separate field commands became the thoroughfare for Chinese as they surged South. UNC forces lacked concentration.²¹

Tempo

Tempo is the rate of speed of military action; controlling or alternating that rate is essential to maintaining the initiative. As opposing forces battle one another, military operations alternate between actions and pauses. Sometimes units go slow at one point in order to go fast later. Commanders seek a tempo that maintains relentless pressure on the enemy to prevent him from recovering from the shock and effects of the attack.²²

On October 24, the MacArthur ordered his commanders “to drive forward with all speed and full utilization of their forces.”²³ However, the speed of the UNC advance North itself endangered success. While MacArthur's lines of communication stretched from the far South into the North, the massive Chinese formations stood nearby staging areas in Manchuria.²⁴ In this manner, UN forces were over-extended risking counterattack and defeat due to imprudent haste.

Cognitive inflexibility on MacArthur's part, during his final thrust to the Yalu, was another devastating flaw that undermined his application of tempo. “As for the intervention of the Chinese, MacArthur simply closed his ears to their threats and apparently ignored or belittled the first strong evidence that they had crossed the Yalu in force.”²⁵ Blatant denial persisted despite a variety of warnings that even included an explicit broadcast of Chinese intentions over the Moscow radio.²⁶ MacArthur and his staff had information on Chinese military capabilities in Manchuria available to them.²⁷ Instead of heeding these warnings in time, MacArthur concluded disastrously that “the time had passed when the joint chiefs should be studying the risks of Chinese entry.”²⁸ In essence, the UNC overlooked 850,000 Chinese soldiers staged along the Yalu of whom

500,000 were estimated to be front-line troops.²⁹ Evidently oblivious to their peril, UNC forces progressed expeditiously toward calamity.

Audacity

Audacity is a key component of any successful offensive operation. A simple plan, boldly executed, requires audacious leaders to negate the disadvantages of numerical inferiority.³⁰

There is no doubt that MacArthur was an audacious, bold or daring, commander. The landing at Inchon “remains an astonishing achievement precisely because it was a triumph not of military logic and science, but of imagination and intuition. It was justified on no other grounds but the most overwhelming, the most simple, it succeeded.”³¹ Nevertheless, a prudent test exists to discriminate between boldness and an imprudent gamble. According to Irwin Rommel, “A bold operation is one which has no more than a chance of success but which, in the case of failure, leaves one with sufficient forces in hand to cope with any situation. A gamble, on the other hand, is an operation which can lead either to victory or to the destruction of one's own forces.”³² MacArthur placed a catastrophic wager that UN forces could consolidate Korea without Chinese intervention.³³ Rather than acting audaciously, he failed Rommel's test. He wagered recklessly on victory and nearly reaped the destruction of his command.

Along the Yalu

Between October 14 and November 1, Chinese forces began entering the PRK. On October 22, the first Chinese soldier of the Korean War was captured by the ROK First Division approximately a mile and a half Northeast of Unsan. The UNC pressed North and the Chinese attacked once UNC forces arrived within 50 miles of the Yalu river. On November 6, the Chinese withdrew from their attack along General Walker's front in the

West. On November 7, the Chinese withdrew North after halting the US Marine First Division at the Chosin Reservoir. However, when MacArthur again launched North of the Chongchon river on November 24, all fury broke loose.³⁴

On November 25, the Chinese Army launched major assaults against both the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps. On the very next day, Eighth Army positions began to crumble as the UNC offensive faltered. The Chinese transformed the Eighth Army's battlefield into a mass of company-sized engagements. These companies fought alone as the UNC could not reinforce them. Onrushing Chinese flanked them in all directions.³⁵

These Chinese, the unseen enemy no more, slashed through the US Second Infantry Division in a series of night attacks. They obliterated the ROK Second Corps and the entire Eighth Army front disintegrated. The US Marine First Division, assigned to the Tenth Corps, was severed from other UNC forces by November 27. It was overwhelmed and also was compelled to retreat.³⁶ It is obvious that near disaster on the Yalu ensued.³⁷

However, General-of-the-Army MacArthur concluded somewhat differently. Reverses were due to insufficient troop strength, unclear policy statements and a variety of other reasons. The retreat was conducted with utmost skill and professionalism. He did not ever admit to shortcomings as commander of United Nations forces. He did not ever suggest that actions after Inchon were flawed. Nevertheless, it can hardly be disputed that this advance to the Yalu cost time, treasure and lives that might have been spared by a halt earlier on. Two bloody years later, an ultimate disposition was achieved far to the South along the 38th parallel.³⁸

Nearly five decades ago under UN banner, thousands of brave warriors died selflessly in an Americans led coalition to liberate conquered Korea. Clearly, surprise,

concentration, tempo and audacity were disregarded during their advance to the Yalu. Such imprudence invites catastrophe. What was General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur thinking?

Notes

¹ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 14 Jun 93, 7-1.

² Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We met the Challenge: How all-out Asian War was Averted: Why MacArthur was Dismissed: Why today's War Objectives must be limited*, Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967, 47.

³ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 1.

⁴ Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We met the Challenge: How all-out Asian War was Averted: Why MacArthur was Dismissed: Why today's War Objectives must be limited*, Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967, 78.

⁵ Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, 88.

⁶ Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We met the Challenge: How all-out Asian War was Averted: Why MacArthur was Dismissed: Why today's War Objectives must be limited*, Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967, 78.

⁷ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 2.

⁸ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 4.

⁹ Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: Jun-Nov 1950*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961, 608.

¹⁰ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 3.

¹¹ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 14 Jun 93, 7-1.

¹² Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War*, New York NY: Times Books, 1982, 323.

¹³ Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War*, New York NY: Times Books, 1982, 323.

¹⁴ Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost*, New York NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986, 309.

¹⁵ S. L. A. Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet: Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November, 1950, in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea*, New York NY: William Morrow & Co., 1953, 1.

¹⁶ Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, 88-100.

¹⁷ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 14 Jun 93, 7-2.

¹⁸ David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, New York NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1964, 125-127.

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¹⁹ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 8.

²⁰ Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Bloody Road to Panmunjom*, New York NY: Stein & Day, 1985, 81.

²¹ David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, New York NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1964, 125-127.

²² FM 100-5, *Operations*, 14 Jun 93, 7-2, 7-3.

²³ David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, New York NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1964, 125-127.

²⁴ Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost*, New York NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986, 289-290.

²⁵ Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We met the Challenge: How all-out Asian War was Averted: Why MacArthur was Dismissed: Why today's War Objectives must be limited*, Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967, 47.

²⁶ *Korea-1950*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 227.

²⁷ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 19.

²⁸ Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, 100.

²⁹ Robert C. W. Thomas, *The War in Korea: 1950-1953, A Military Study of the War in Korea up to the Signing of the Cease Fire*, Hampshire, Great Britain: Aldershot, 1954, 48-49.

³⁰ FM 100-5, *Operations*, 14 Jun 93, 7-3.

³¹ Joseph L. Collins, *War in Peacetime: The History and Lessons of Korea*, Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1969, 141.

³² Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu: Jun-Nov 1950*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961, 749.

³³ Robert C. W. Thomas, *The War in Korea: 1950-1953, A Military Study of the War in Korea up to the Signing of the Cease Fire*, Hampshire, Great Britain: Aldershot, 1954, 49-50.

³⁴ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 20-21.

³⁵ Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War*, New York, NY: Times Books, 1982, 342.

³⁶ T. R. Fehrenbach, *The Fight for Korea: From the War of 1950 to the Pueblo Incident*, New York NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1969, 83.

³⁷ Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We met the Challenge: How all-out Asian War was Averted: Why MacArthur was Dismissed: Why today's War Objectives must be limited*, Garden City NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967, 47.

³⁸ LTC Charles E. Kerr, "Flawed Decisions: The Korean War, September - November 1950" (U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Apr 1996), 20-21-22.

Chapter 3

Narcissus in the Flesh

According to legend, Narcissus, a Greek youth, fell so deeply in love with his own reflection that he pined away and died.¹ This story warns that great promise and even survival itself can be lost through excessive adoration of, and absorption in, one self. In the preceding chapter, I argue that Douglas MacArthur was raised a patrician imbued with *noblesse oblige*. He assumed trappings of secular deity ever evident to others through his colossal grandiosity. No one, with the prominent exception of his domineering mother, subscribed more ardently to his high state than did Douglas MacArthur.

President Truman remarked on the period leading to MacArthur's dismissal in Korea, "Once again, General MacArthur had openly defied the policy of his Commander in Chief, the President of the United States."² MacArthur, himself, testified before Senate committee, "I find in existence a new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept, that the members of our armed forces owe primary allegiance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the executive branch of the government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they are sworn to defend."³ Therefore, Truman and MacArthur agreed at once, this General-of-the-Army understood his prerogatives to surpass even those of the President. Clearly, by US military tradition as well as the force

of law, no soldier is empowered to thwart the lawful orders of his President, our military Commander-in-Chief. I will argue MacArthur's peculiar observation was less the exalted view of a god than the diminished perspective of Narcissus.

Narcissism and the Gifted Child

Even in earliest childhood, consciously and unconsciously, the fulfillment of parental wishes and needs is a dominating developmental issue. Long before altruistic desire to give, share, and sacrifice originates internally, the child performs such behaviors. A child will subordinate his natural inclinations so as not to risk the loss of parental love. A compliant child is routinely praised as “good.” Within bounds and balanced by nurturing opportunities for the child to explore his own needs including autonomy, this socialization process is altogether healthy.

From a psychoanalytic orientation, Miller has written compellingly on the topic of narcissism. She contends the gifted, precocious and capable, child is especially at risk for an extreme and dysfunctional variant of the otherwise healthy socialization process referenced above. A gifted child, in particular, may rigidly and dutifully conform to every perceived parental wish for order, service and excellence. Such a child may appear to exemplify maturity. In reality, finding so much repugnant in his own hidden rebellious self, he rigorously rejects others as well. Consequently, incapable of unconditional love as opposed to mere need for others, he perseveres bravely clinging to his understanding that they are not nearly so good as is he. The resultant adult is as devoted to his false, conforming and idealized self as he is devoid of genuine regard for the inferiors that surround him.⁴ With emotional growth profoundly stunted and superior cognitive

capabilities left unmolested, intellectual fortes blossom and contribute enormously to defend the gifted narcissist.⁵

Among Miller's narcissistic adult patients who once were gifted children, their maternal relationships uniformly manifested three determining factors. First, the mother depended on her child to behave in some particular fashion for her own narcissistic wellbeing and typically was able to hide her insecurities behind a mask of authoritarian control. Second, the child discerned maternal desires with uncanny sensitivity and fidelity to accomplish his assigned role. Third, the gifted child secured maternal "love" by fulfilling his role as admirable offspring bolstering his fragile emotional security.⁶

Ultimately, the narcissistic adult's desire for autonomy from his domineering mother may show itself in a break from formerly compliant attitudes as he repeatedly provokes situations risking exposure, isolation and even rejection by her.⁷ Miller portrays the genuine, yet unanswered, question from gifted child turned narcissistic adult to his mother as follows. "What would have happened if I had appeared before you, bad, ugly, angry, jealous, lazy, dirty, smelly? Where would your love have been then?"⁸ At the core of this eventual insurrection against maternal domination is the child's legitimate yearning to be taken seriously, respected and genuinely understood by his mother.⁹

Grandiosity is the narcissistic adult's drug of choice to combat underlying feelings of alienation and emptiness. For at his core, he is cold, detached and disdainful. He demands unequalled achievement from himself, to be the superstar and always to be "on top."¹⁰ In arenas where supremacy is uncertain, he will not compete.¹¹ He demands to be admired perpetually by others and can not fathom life without their adoration. Others, including sexual partners, exist to worship him.

This lust for admiration stems from the childhood trauma. So long as he believes his accomplishments alone have value and fundamentally disavows himself, he is compelled to achieve for two reasons. First, he is ravenous for adoration to stave off emotional collapse into alienation, isolation and worthlessness. Second, his emotional equilibrium is perpetually held hostage to personal qualities, functions and achievements that can fail him in an instant and without warning. Desperately seeking maternal love he truly never experienced and confusing adulation for love, no amount of adulation is sufficient because adulation and love are different.¹² To be secure, he craves the omnipotence possessed by a god, and unattainable by Narcissus.

Narcissism and Douglas MacArthur

This history of the gifted child turned narcissistic adult bears uncanny likeness to the developmental history of General-of-the-Army MacArthur. As will be recalled, the gifted child is particularly vulnerable to a dysfunctional maternal relationship during developmental years. Characterized by three essential factors, this pathological maternal relationship gives genesis to adulthood narcissism. It follows that Douglas MacArthur was particularly at risk to the extent he was gifted and his maternal relationship conformed to Miller's three essential factors. From information already presented, these criteria are fully satisfied.

If ever there was a gifted son, his name was Douglas MacArthur. Recall that Douglas attained the highest entry score to West Point among his classmates. Four years later, he graduated with the second highest standing ever achieved at West Point as well as the highest senior year performance recorded. Athletically talented, he scored West Point's winning run against Navy in baseball and managed the football team. As a leader

even in his adolescence, he testified before Congress. Nearly two decades after graduation his former West Point chemistry instructor cited MacArthur most likely to garner supreme fame and glory in World War I.

With regard to a dysfunctional maternal relationship; first, Pinkey desperately depended on Douglas to show himself worthy of the MacArthur lineage and traditions. As the daughter of southern gentry, she certainly wagered audaciously to marry a Union war hero so soon after the Civil War. In a time when “proper” women were not autonomous outside of the home, what else could repay a mother’s sacrifice so handsomely as gloriously admirable children? She spent countless hours imprinting Douglas with family stories of glory and heroism for him to emulate and surpass. She immersed him in traditions of southern nobility. If she was anything, she was an authoritative influence on Douglas from his birth, to West Point and beyond. She was the one who directed him to be ruthlessly ambitiously and guided him along paths of righteousness for their name’s sake. Second, even as a youngster, Douglas certainly was quick to discern and conform to the comportment required by mother. What could account better for her son’s fastidious manner of dress, just like mother’s side of the family, than her son’s desperate longing to please her? Third, the role of admirably precocious child certainly fortified young MacArthur’s emotional security with mother’s “love.” Wasn’t she perpetually attentive to him as a child, nursing Douglas and his brother relentlessly after the death of her eldest son? Didn’t she care enough about his future to accompany him to West Point? Didn’t Douglas forthrightly acknowledge her as a dominant factor in his life? Young Douglas MacArthur, already so full of

accomplishment and tomorrow's promise, was he nurtured in his mother's unconditional love or instead by her justified adoration?

The General's adulthood rebellion against Pinkey, anticipated by Miller's formulation, was conducted on potentially the most treacherous terrain of all, his relationships with other women. A vivacious divorcee with a checkered past and a wondering eye could never be accepted by Pinkey as Mrs. Douglas MacArthur. Pinkey's acceptance of a Eurasian mistress, kept by her son the Army Chief of Staff in a secluded Washington D.C. love nest, was beyond the pale of contemplation. After Douglas married the former, his mother did substantially isolate and reject him until the marriage ended and she returned triumphant. Douglas was mercifully spared maternal damnation for his Eurasian dalliance solely by the timely last minute intervention of an emissary fortified with a stack of cash as payoff.

Apart from the developmental history of the gifted child turned narcissistic adult just presented, the actual diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder is determined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fourth Edition*, DSM-IV, of the American Psychiatric Association.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder Traits

According to the DSM-IV, a personality disorder is shown by traits (i.e., enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself) that are inflexible and maladaptive and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress. These personality traits generally must be evident in behavior by early adulthood and commonly are substantiated by information from others.¹³

A narcissistic personality disorder is diagnosed with at least five of nine diagnostic criteria satisfied. First, the individual may have “a grandiose sense of self-importance.” Second, the individual may be “preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.” Third, the individual may believe “that he or she is 'special' and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with other special or high status people (or institutions.)” Forth, the individual may require “excessive admiration.” Fifth, the individual may have “a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations.” Sixth, the individual may be “interpersonally exploitive, i.e., tak(ing) advantage of others to achieve his or her ends.” Seventh, the individual may lack empathy: be “unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.” Eighth, the individual may often be “envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.” Ninth, the individual may show “arrogant, haughty, behaviors or attitudes.”¹⁴ While doctors take great pains diagnosing narcissistic personality disorder, “others call them conceited.”¹⁵

In the interest of clarity and parsimony, only criteria contributing to the following diagnosis are discussed. Therefore, criteria six and seven are omitted.

First Diagnostic Criteria

MacArthur’s grandiosity was legion. He regarded himself and the pope as the two great defenders of the Christian world.¹⁶ He was conceited and ostentatious.¹⁷ As was previously cited, he regarded his own prerogatives in the field to surpass those of the President. General Crowder and a West Point classmate agree, MacArthur was “flamboyantly egotistic” or “arrogant” without peer. What is it for a graduating West

Point cadet to refuse the outstretched hand of the Secretary of War if not arrogantly grandiose?

Second Diagnostic Criteria

Second, he surely was preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power and brilliance. That was the point of Pinkey's ubiquitous tutelage on success, aspirations and ruthless ambition. What else must have been the point of MacArthur's ill-fated Presidential aspiration?¹⁸

Third Diagnostic Criteria

Third, he believed he was "special" and unique, and surely he was. Nevertheless, MacArthur also was aloof holding himself above others unnecessarily.¹⁹ He was addressed as the General by his wife, and as the General by others even in situations where the Philippine President was called by his first name.²⁰ He referred to his second wife lovingly as "my finest soldier."²¹ Soldiers are not the equals of generals and he probably knew that, even though generals certainly may appreciate their subordinates among the ranks. A Japanese during the postwar occupation put words to common thought comparing MacArthur to a second Jesus Christ given that Hirohito was only a man.²²

Fourth Diagnostic Criteria

He required excessive admiration as he hungered for public acclaim. After comparison, some of his closest associates proclaimed Douglas MacArthur superior to Alexander the Great. He relished the "idolatry" of those that revered his thoughts and person as well. His vanity and craving for adulation was an immense flaw.²³

Fifth Diagnostic Criteria

Fifth, he had a grand sense of entitlement and sulked when others failed to comply with his expectations. No hint of reservation in embracing the MacArthur plan was tolerable. General Marshall described him as “supersensitive about everything.” General Kenney described him as “extremely sensitive to criticism.” Given his unflappable conviction that the MacArthur way was the correct way, he easily rationalized his drives and actions as pristine and selfless.²⁴

Eighth Diagnostic Criteria

MacArthur perennially was on guard for conspirators plotting against him from Washington and who, by his appraisal, coveted a MacArthur's dominion.²⁵ General Marshall was perceived as chief culprit among them. During World War II, MacArthur was paranoid in distrust of Europeans in general and the British in specific. Again, arguably this was due to his projection that they coveted his prowess and prerogatives.²⁶

Ninth Diagnostic Criteria

Finally, this research is replete with instances where MacArthur was arrogant or haughty in behaviors or attitudes. His relationship with Washington was poisoned by his egomania. Hubris was his undoing.²⁷

Significant Functional Impairment

Seven enduring and inflexible narcissistic personality disorder traits are demonstrated above. Therefore, to the extent they are associated with significant functional impairment, a narcissistic personality disorder is evident.

Diagnosis Affirmed

Notwithstanding General-of-the-Army MacArthur's quibble over insufficient troop strength, unclear policy statements and skillful retreats, the UNC Yalu advance was calamitous. The position that MacArthur was unschooled or inexperienced for such senior command lacks merit. He was US Army Chief of Staff in the 1930s and Supreme Commander for Allied Powers during World War II. The general had decades of flag experience tempered by grueling war. According to Churchill, MacArthur was "the glorious commander." According to Montgomery, he was the "best (American) soldier" of World War II. Lord Alanbrooke proclaimed him "the greatest general and best strategist that war (World War II) produced." Even General Marshall, who personally found MacArthur distasteful, designated him "our most brilliant general."²⁸

Monumental narcissism is at the core of MacArthur personal failure to heed requirements for successful offensive operations. With regard to surprise, MacArthur was narcissistic to allow such intimate details of his operation to be divulged with so little apparent care. With regard to concentration, he was narcissistic to diffuse combat power across the Korean peninsula between two competing commanders as though this was not relevant to his UNC. With regard to tempo, MacArthur was narcissistic to carelessly overextend his supply lines without reservation. According to MacArthur, himself, "The vulnerability of the enemy is in his supply position."²⁹ Finally, with regard to audacity, he was narcissistic to believe a half million Chinese opponents would never dare oppose General-of-the-Army MacArthur with arms. These are the reckless acts of a man thoroughly convinced of his own omnipotence and infallibility, with intimidated subordinates reluctant to risk disapproval, and superiors dissuaded from critical review

following a glorious victory at Inchon. Clearly, MacArthur's narcissism yielded significant functional impairment throughout the two month UNC advance to the Yalu. When the forces of a US general-of-the-army are overrun in mass and that general-of-the-army is unceremonious dismissed by his President, criteria is met. Significant functional impairment is irrefutably demonstrated.

In fact, MacArthur's military record reveals a longstanding pattern of narcissistically impaired performance quite likely ameliorated by MacArthur connections. When Douglas threatened to resign as a West Point cadet unless excused from an examination, his narcissism was evident. The fact that Douglas' father was a serving senior general officer may have helped the lieutenant colonel instructor decide to vindicate Douglas as he, himself, lost face. When Douglas refused the outstretched congratulating hand of the Secretary of War at West Point graduation, he was narcissistic. The unseemly spectacle of the Secretary acting against the top West Point graduate and adolescent son of his longstanding opponent may have spared Douglas retribution. When Douglas chanced court-martial for insubordination on three occasions as a junior officer and achieved recommissioning from major to colonel against the rules, he was narcissistic. As will be recalled, the US Army senior leadership in place was beholden to his father for its rise to prominence. I suspect strongly that powerful MacArthur connections and the MacArthur name repeatedly attenuated "significant functional impairment" throughout his career.

With seven traits and significant functional impairment demonstrated, MacArthur's narcissistic personality disorder is affirmed. As was asked previously regarding his ill-fated Yalu advance, "What was General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur thinking? Quite evidently, he was thinking narcissistically.

Notes

¹ Jerrold S. Maxmen, *Essential Psychopathology and its Treatment*, New York NY: W. W. Norton, 1995, 399.

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³ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 631.

⁴ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), vii-ix.

⁵ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 38.

⁶ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 8.

⁷ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 6-18.

⁸ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 15.

⁹ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 32.

¹⁰ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 6-18.

¹¹ Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), 38.

¹² Alice Miller, *Prisoners of Childhood: The Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self*, trans. Ruth Ward (New York NY: Basic Books, 1981), 38-42.

¹³ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 630.

¹⁴ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 661.

¹⁵ Jerrold S. Maxmen, *Essential Psychopathology and its Treatment*, New York NY: W. W. Norton, 1995, 399.

¹⁶ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 3.

¹⁷ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 7.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Perret, *The Life of Douglas MacArthur: Old Soldiers Never Die*, New York NY: Random House, 1996, 530-531.

¹⁹ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 5-6.

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²¹ Clark Lee and Richard Henschel, *Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), 64.

²² William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 474.

²³ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 3-9.

²⁴ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 9.

²⁵ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 625.

²⁶ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 4.

²⁷ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 9.

²⁸ William R. Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978, 4.

²⁹ *Joint Operations Historical Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 Jul 97), II-1.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

"How dare you and so what? MacArthur has been dead for over three decades and certainly requires neither clinical care nor appraisal from an Air War College student. Remember Colonel, General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur was Army Chief of Staff at your age." These criticisms are obvious, unavoidable and merit response.

I dare to diagnose MacArthur as a licensed clinical psychologist. With a Ph.D., a residency, past university appointment as an associate professor of psychology, and two decades of experience, I am ethically, educationally and legally entitled to my opinion. Although this research is more extensive than the typical "mental health evaluation" I might undertake, much of the process is identical. The notable exception to accepted practice is that the subject was not interviewed for the most obvious reason. However, because pertinent historical data is extensive and personality disorders are diagnosed by history, my assessment is not invalidated on that account.

The "so what question" is addressed best by the very nature of academic endeavor. In my training, scholarship serves an organizational, a heuristic and a predictive function. First, the narcissistic personality disorder diagnosis brings order to otherwise exasperatingly contradictory MacArthur behaviors. Given this clinical framework, MacArthur's actions no longer seem contradictory attaining consistency, instead. Second,

the heuristic function (i.e., the advancement of learning) is promoted to the extent this assessment assists others to better understand MacArthur. In the future, the enormous chasm between conclusions drawn by MacArthur admirers and detractors could be narrowed through enhanced understanding of the man. Third, the predictive function is overwhelmingly the most salient aspect from a strictly military perspective. Recall that "(k)nowing the enemy commander's intent" is vital to the element of surprise during offensive operations. Therefore, to the extent the Chinese perceived MacArthur's behavioral consistencies, they were well served. To the extent MacArthur's behavioral consistencies were not fully appreciated by his seniors in a timely fashion, they were served badly.

I argue more broadly that assessment of behavioral consistencies among friend and foe, alike, is a vital and underutilized tool across the spectrum of military contingencies. At a time when pundits decry the lack, expense, and unreliability of "humint," human intelligence, a substantial cadre of skilled mental health professionals is readily available to assist. New force structure or technology is not required. Efficacy is demonstrated.

In conclusion, General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur was a complex man whose psyche was perennially in turmoil. His emotional development was arrested in childhood as his intellect soared unfettered. Although his personality disorder explains many frailties, it does nothing to diminish his peerless accomplishments. Those bear tribute to the drive and capabilities of a Douglas MacArthur. Denied the qualities of a god and destined for the role of Narcissus instead, he lived faithful to his duty, honor and country as best he could. Upon reflection, who among us has done better?

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